

Supported Decision Making: Our Initiative

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Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

Supported Decision Making: Definitions

“While there is no singular definition or model of Supported Decision Making, it generally occurs “when people with disabilities—including those that are related to changes in memory or cognition—work with family, friends, professionals, and others they trust to help them understand the situations and choices they face, ask questions, receive explanations in language they understand, and communicate their own decisions to others.”

Peter Blanck & Jonathan G. Martinis, “*The Right to Make Choices*”: *The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making*, 3 INCLUSION 24, 26 (2015).

“Supported decision-making can be defined as a series of relationships, practices, arrangements, and agreements, of more or less formality and intensity, designed to assist an individual with a disability to make and communicate to others decisions about the individual’s life.”

Robert Dinerstein, “*Implementing Legal Capacity Under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Difficult Road From Guardianship to Supported Decision-Making*”, 19 HUM. RTS. BRIEF 8, 10 (2012)

Specific to the Needs of the Individual

There is no “one size fits all” method of Supported Decision-Making.

Examples include:

- Informal support
- Written agreements, like Powers of Attorney, identifying the support needed and who will give it
- Formal Micro-Boards and Circles of Support

- Martinis, Blanck, and Gonzalez, 2015.

Benefits: Virginia Pilot Program Results

Supported Decision-Making can help people:

- Understand information, issues, and choices
- Focus attention in decision-making
- Weigh options
- Ensure that decisions are based on their own preferences
- Interpret and/or communicate decisions to other parties

Supported Decision-Making showed benefits for young adults:

- Increased independence, confidence, and decision-making abilities
- Better decisions
- Enhanced quality of life

Basic Description

Disability Rights Nebraska has initiated a multi-year initiative to raise awareness and education about Supported Decision Making

- The initiative intends to raise awareness of and educate about Supported Decision Making for people with disabilities (in a variety of fields)
 - Start conversations, clarify concepts, describe benefits and application
 - Vehicle for building self-determination and maintain choices for people with disabilities
 - An alternative to inappropriate/undue guardianships or a supplement to an appropriate guardianship
- Focused on stakeholders, families, and individuals with disabilities (current or potential)
 - Looking to expand “field representatives” and make new connections

Highlights of Plans for FY 2023

1. Present to organizations and individuals (statewide) to educate about Supported Decision Making
2. Create a web-based “resource clearinghouse” for educational materials, presentations, videos, etc.
3. Create brochures and a video series to educate people about Supported Decision Making
4. Establish educational “Ambassadors” who can educate others about Supported Decision Making: to provide peer education and empirical examples of using Supported Decision Making

Highlights of Plans for FY 2024

1. Hold a Statewide Summit to educate people about Supported Decision Making (Spring 2024)
2. Continue educational presentations statewide, adding legal and judicial entities (including “Ambassadors”)
3. Continue creation of educational materials (brochures, videos, web clearinghouse)
4. “Pivot to Policy”— analysis of Supported Decision Making laws and policy to develop a report with policy recommendations for Nebraska

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